

REMARKS

As a preliminary matter, Applicants herewith resubmit a copy of the Form PTO-1449 originally filed on January 30, 2004. The document has been marked-up to read “2000-003609” instead of “2000-003069,” which is incorrect.

Claims 16 and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claims 16 and 17 have been amended in a readily apparent manner to overcome this rejection, withdrawal of which is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4-7 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Nakabayashi et al. Independent claim 1 has been canceled and its subject matter incorporated in claim 3. Claims 4-17 have been amended to depend from claim 3. Since claim 3 is not anticipated by the Nakabayashi et al. reference, all pending claims 3-17 are now believed to be allowable over Nakabayashi et al. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Moreover, claim 4 recites that the planar light guide plate has light-reflecting elements for reflecting light on end faces thereof which are opposite to the first and second light sources, respectively. Fig. 23C of Nakabayashi et al. discloses two light guide members 203 (See column 22, lines 21 to 22). The reference, however, does not disclose that the reflectors 2 are part of the light guide members. Therefore, Nakabayashi et al. fail to disclose (or suggest) that the planar light guide plate has light-reflecting elements, as called for in claim 4. Claim 4 is allowable for this reason, also.

Claims 3 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakabayashi et al. in view of Koike et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection, because the references, alone or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the light-scattering element formed of fine irregularities on the light reflecting surface of the planar light guide plate.

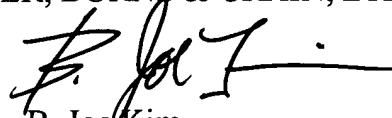
The Nakabayashi et al. reference discloses in Fig. 23C the use of grooves 204 having slopes 241 and 242 for reflecting light from the light sources 2. Fig. 11(a) of Koike et al. shows reflective appearance prevention portions 6(a) and 6(b) also for reflecting light from the light sources L. Neither of these references, however, disclose that a light-scattering element is formed of fine irregularities on the light-reflecting surface of the planar light guide plate, as in the present invention. Accordingly, even if these references were combined, the resulting device still would not include the claimed light-scattering element of the present invention. For this reason, independent claim 3 and its dependent claims 4-17 are allowable over the cited references.

For all of the above reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. The Examiner should contact Applicants' undersigned attorney if a telephone conference would expedite prosecution.

Respectfully submitted,

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